

When the civil war broke out in 1962, Dr. John was too young to fight and was sent away to high school in Tanzania. In 1969, he earned a scholarship attend Grinnell College in Iowa. After graduation he could have attended graduate school at the University of California at Berkeley but turned it down, choosing instead, to return to Tanzania to study agricultural economics where he could be closer to his people.

In 1972, Dr. John joined the Sudanese military and became a career soldier. He eventually took a leave and earned his doctorate in agricultural economics from the University of Iowa. But a life of academic repose was not for Dr. John for he was a man of action and passion. And the actions and passions of his time called him to a life of struggle on behalf of the oppressed people of his country.

In 1983, Dr. John left the military and joined the newly created Sudanese Peoples' Liberation Army, a movement opposed to the imposition of Sharia law. Thus began his long career as the political and military leader of the people of Southern Sudan.

Throughout this struggle, Dr. John developed a strong political and personal relationship with many Members of the House of Representatives.

The struggle for justice in Sudan was not a partisan issue for Members of Congress. Strong bonds of collegiality and friendship were formed through our efforts to shape U.S. foreign policy toward Sudan.

In that sense, Dr. John's life and struggle, and the struggle of the Southern Sudanese people served to unite Democrats and Republicans in a common cause for freedom.

When I first met with Dr. John in my congressional office, I recall he did not waste words. In his soft-spoken way, he laid out very clearly his vision for Southern Sudan. And, in his highly dignified way, this powerfully charismatic man of deep conviction and strong moral character asked for my support and the support of the United States Congress on behalf of his people. It was clear to me then, as it is now, that Dr. John lived a purposeful life of singular devotion to the liberation and well-being of his people.

Dr. John's tragic death in the mountains of Uganda shocked the world. It seems enormously unjust for this man, who brought his people through a long and devastating civil war, who became Vice President of Sudan, and who later became head of Southern Sudan, to die in 2005 in a helicopter crash.

Madam Speaker, out of this historic tragedy, the people of Southern Sudan have been called to carry on. As Dr. John said after being inaugurated: "I congratulate the Sudanese people. This is not my peace or the peace of al-Bashir; it is the peace of the Sudanese people."

Madam Speaker, the recognition this House today gives Dr. John Garang de Mabior should also remind us of the importance of redoubling our resolve to end the genocide in Darfur. There is wide-spread and broad-based consensus in America and between Democrats and Republicans that the ongoing genocide in Darfur is intolerable and must be ended. Thus, this is an area in which there is ample opportunity for the Congress and the Bush administration to find common ground to alleviate the overwhelming suffering in Darfur.

Not since the Rwandan genocide of 1994 has the world seen such a systematic cam-

paign of displacement, starvation, rape, mass murder, and terror as we are witnessing in Darfur for the last 3 years. At least 400,000 people have been killed; more than 2 million innocent civilians have been forced to flee their homes and now live in displaced-persons camps in Sudan or in refugee camps in neighboring Chad; and more than 3.5 million men, women, and children are completely reliant on international aid for survival. Unless the world stirs from its slumber and takes concerted and decisive action to relieve this suffering, the ongoing genocide in Darfur will stand as one of the blackest marks on humankind for centuries to come. The people of Darfur cannot wait. The time has come for decisive leadership from the United States.

It has been more than 2 years since I and my colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus Darfur Task Force met with Secretary Colin Powell to press successfully for the administration to declare that the campaign of ethnic cleansing and atrocities carried out against civilians primarily by the Government of Sudan and its allied Janjaweed militias is genocide.

It has been more than a year since I flew to Chad and walked across the border to Sudan and met with African Union troops who pleaded for more peacekeeping authority and the resources to protect the refugees from violence, rather than merely monitor it. After returning from that Congressional delegation, I worked with other Members of Congress to secure increased funding to aid the thousands of Sudanese displaced to refugee camps in Chad and to provide additional funding to assist Chad in responding to the humanitarian crisis.

It has been almost 2 years since the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1556 demanding that the government of Sudan disarm the Janjaweed. This demand was later followed by Resolution 1706, which authorizes a 20,000 strong U.N. peacekeeping force.

It has been 6 months since the Darfur Peace Agreement was brokered in May 2006 between the Government of Sudan and one faction of Darfur rebels.

But still the violence continues; indeed, the violence is escalating. This violence is making it even more dangerous, if not impossible, for most of the millions of displaced persons to return to their homes and for humanitarian relief agencies to bring food and medical aid. According to Jan Egeland, the U.N.'s top humanitarian official, the situation in Darfur is "going from real bad to catastrophic."

We have come full circle. Violence is increasing, peace treaties are falling apart, and again as a member of the Congressional Black Caucus Darfur Taskforce and a ranking member on the House Judiciary immigration subcommittee, I have been meeting with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice seeking an increase in the number of refugee visas for Darfur students to come to the United States to study. I will continue my ongoing, unceasing efforts to end the suffering in Darfur and bring peace to Sudan. These efforts include intensifying my discussions with Secretary Rice, the United States Ambassador to the United Nations, representatives of the Arab League, and humanitarian groups such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and various African public policy groups to discuss ways and means of bringing peace to that troubled land.

It is also not too early to begin the hard thinking and hard work needed to transform the Darfur region from killing field to economically, politically, and socially viable and peaceful community. This work will, of course, require the active and purposeful engagement of the United States and other key stakeholders, such as China, and the Arab League. In this connection, I have been engaged in an ongoing dialogue with government representatives of Egypt, a dialogue that has already yielded significant dividends. For example, Egypt has implemented several fast track projects in southern Sudan in different sectors involving health, agriculture, electricity, irrigation, infrastructure, and education in order to make unity an even more attractive option to the people of south Sudan.

It must be noted that no just and lasting peace in Sudan can be achieved without the responsible intervention of China. For too long China, which is Sudan's biggest oil customer, has also served as Khartoum's enabler and protector by preventing the U.N. Security Council from imposing more serious sanctions on Sudan in response to the genocide and crimes against humanity committed in Darfur. As former Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick stated in a major policy speech on China a year ago: "China should take more than oil from Sudan—it should take some responsibility for resolving Sudan's human crisis." Based on my meetings with Zhou Wenzhong, China's ambassador to the United States, I am hopeful that China can be persuaded to provide the type of constructive leadership in Sudan befitting a great power.

There is much work to be done and not much time, Madam Speaker. And I have no doubt that our response will be worthy of our responsibility as a world leader. But today, it is right and good and just to pause, reflect, and honor the remarkable life of a remarkable human being—Dr. John Garang de Mabior, which we will do by adopting H. Res. 98.

I urge all my colleagues to join me in supporting the resolution.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PAYNE. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 98, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. PAYNE of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

#### NATO FREEDOM CONSOLIDATION ACT OF 2007

Mr. TANNER. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the

bill (H.R. 987) to endorse further enlargement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and to facilitate the timely admission of new members to NATO, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 987

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “NATO Freedom Consolidation Act of 2007”.

#### SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) The sustained commitment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to mutual defense has made possible the democratic transformation of Central and Eastern Europe. Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization can and should play a critical role in addressing the security challenges of the post-Cold War era in creating the stable environment needed for those emerging democracies in Europe.

(2) Lasting stability and security in Europe requires the military, economic, and political integration of emerging democracies into existing European structures.

(3) In an era of threats from terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization is increasingly contributing to security in the face of global security challenges for the protection and interests of its member states.

(4) In the NATO Participation Act of 1994 (title II of Public Law 103-447; 22 U.S.C. 1928 note), Congress declared that “full and active participants in the Partnership for Peace in a position to further the principles of the North Atlantic Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area should be invited to become full NATO members in accordance with Article 10 of such Treaty at an early date . . .”.

(5) In the NATO Enlargement Facilitation Act of 1996 (title VI of section 101(c) of title I of division A of Public Law 104-208; 22 U.S.C. 1928 note), Congress called for the prompt admission of Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Slovenia to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and declared that “in order to promote economic stability and security in Slovakia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania, Moldova, and Ukraine . . . the process of enlarging NATO to include emerging democracies in Central and Eastern Europe should not be limited to consideration of admitting Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Slovenia as full members of the NATO Alliance”.

(6) In the European Security Act of 1998 (title XXVII of division G of Public Law 105-277; 22 U.S.C. 1928 note), Congress declared that “Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic should not be the last emerging democracies in Central and Eastern Europe invited to join NATO” and that “Romania, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Bulgaria . . . would make an outstanding contribution to furthering the goals of NATO and enhancing stability, freedom, and peace in Europe should they become NATO members [and] upon complete satisfaction of all relevant criteria should be invited to become full NATO members at the earliest possible date”.

(7) In the Gerald B. H. Solomon Freedom Consolidation Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-187; 22 U.S.C. 1928 note), Congress endorsed “... the vision of further enlargement of the NATO Alliance articulated by President George W. Bush on June 15, 2001, and by former President William J. Clinton on October 22, 1996”.

(8) At the Madrid Summit of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in July 1997, Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic were invited to join the Alliance, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization heads of state and government issued a declaration stating “[t]he alliance expects to extend further invitations in coming years to nations willing and able to assume the responsibilities and obligations of membership . . . [n]o European democratic country whose admission would fulfill the objectives of the [North Atlantic] Treaty will be excluded from consideration”.

(9) At the Washington Summit of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in April 1999, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization heads of state and government issued a communiqué declaring “[w]e pledge that NATO will continue to welcome new members in a position to further the principles of the [North Atlantic] Treaty and contribute to peace and security in the Euro-Atlantic area . . . [t]he three new members will not be the last . . . [n]o European democratic country whose admission would fulfill the objectives of the Treaty will be excluded from consideration, regardless of its geographic location . . .”.

(10) In May 2000 in Vilnius, Lithuania, the foreign ministers of Albania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Republic of Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia issued a statement (later joined by Croatia) declaring that—

(A) their countries will cooperate in jointly seeking membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in the next round of enlargement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization;

(B) the realization of membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization by one or more of these countries would be a success for all; and

(C) eventual membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization for all of these countries would be a success for Europe and for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

(11) On June 15, 2001, in a speech in Warsaw, Poland, President George W. Bush stated “[a]ll of Europe’s new democracies, from the Baltic to the Black Sea and all that lie between, should have the same chance for security and freedom—and the same chance to join the institutions of Europe—as Europe’s old democracies have . . . I believe in NATO membership for all of Europe’s democracies that seek it and are ready to share the responsibilities that NATO brings . . . [a]s we plan to enlarge NATO, no nation should be used as a pawn in the agenda of others . . . [w]e will not trade away the fate of free European peoples . . . [n]o more Munichs . . . [n]o more Yaltas . . . [a]s we plan the Prague Summit, we should not calculate how little we can get away with, but how much we can do to advance the cause of freedom”.

(12) On October 22, 1996, in a speech in Detroit, Michigan, former President William J. Clinton stated “NATO’s doors will not close behind its first new members . . . NATO should remain open to all of Europe’s emerging democracies who are ready to shoulder the responsibilities of membership . . . [n]o nation will be automatically excluded . . . [n]o country outside NATO will have a veto . . . [a] gray zone of insecurity must not re-emerge in Europe”.

(13) At the Prague Summit of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in November 2002, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia were invited to join the Alliance in the second round of enlargement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization since the end of the Cold War, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization heads of state and government issued a declaration stating “NATO’s door will remain open to European democracies

willing and able to assume the responsibilities and obligations of membership, in accordance with Article 10 of the Washington Treaty”.

(14) On May 8, 2003, the United States Senate unanimously approved the Resolution of Ratification to Accompany Treaty Document No. 108-4, Protocols to the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949 on Accession of Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia, inviting Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

(15) At the Istanbul Summit of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in June 2004, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization heads of state and government issued a communiqué reaffirming that NATO’s door remains open to new members, declaring “[w]e celebrate the success of NATO’s Open Door Policy, and reaffirm today that our seven new members will not be the last. The door to membership remains open. We welcome the progress made by Albania, Croatia, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (1) in implementing their Annual National Programmes under the Membership Action Plan, and encourage them to continue pursuing the reforms necessary to progress toward NATO membership. We also commend their contribution to regional stability and cooperation. We want all three countries to succeed and will continue to assist them in their reform efforts. NATO will continue to assess each country’s candidacy individually, based on the progress made towards reform goals pursued through the Membership Action Plan, which will remain the vehicle to keep the readiness of each aspirant for membership under review. We direct that NATO Foreign Ministers keep the enlargement process, including the implementation of the Membership Action Plan, under continual review and report to us. We will review at the next Summit progress by aspirants towards membership based on that report”.

(16) Georgia and Ukraine have stated their desire to join the Euro-Atlantic community, and in particular, are seeking to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Georgia and Ukraine are working closely with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and its members to meet criteria for eventual membership in NATO.

(17) At a press conference with President Mikhail Saakashvili of Georgia in Washington, DC on July 5, 2006, President George W. Bush stated that “... I believe that NATO would benefit with Georgia being a member of NATO, and I think Georgia would benefit. And there’s a way forward through the Membership Action Plan . . . And I’m a believer in the expansion of NATO. I think it’s in the world’s interest that we expand NATO”.

(18) Following a meeting of NATO Foreign Ministers in New York on September 21, 2006, NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer announced the launching of an Intensified Dialogue on membership between the Alliance and Georgia.

(19) At the NATO-Ukraine Commission Summit in Brussels in February 2005, President of Ukraine Victor Yushchenko declared membership in NATO as the ultimate goal of Ukraine’s cooperation with the Alliance and expressed Ukraine’s desire to conclude a Membership Action Plan.

(20) At the NATO-Ukraine Commission Foreign Ministerial meeting in Vilnius in April 2005, NATO and Ukraine launched an Intensified Dialogue on the potential membership of Ukraine in NATO.

(21) At the Riga Summit of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in November 2006, the Heads of State and Government of the

member countries of NATO issued a declaration reaffirming that NATO's door remains open to new members, declaring that "all European democratic countries may be considered for MAP (Membership Action Plan) or admission, subject to decision by the NAC (North Atlantic Council) at each stage, based on the performance of these countries towards meeting the objectives of the North Atlantic Treaty. We direct that NATO Foreign Ministers keep that process under continual review and report to us. We welcome the efforts of Albania, Croatia, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to prepare themselves for the responsibilities and obligations of membership. We reaffirm that the Alliance will continue with Georgia and Ukraine its Intensified Dialogues which cover the full range of political, military, financial and security issues relating to those countries' aspirations to membership, without prejudice to any eventual Alliance decision. We reaffirm the importance of the NATO-Ukraine Distinctive Partnership, which has its 10th anniversary next year and welcome the progress that has been made in the framework of our Intensified Dialogue. We appreciate Ukraine's substantial contributions to our common security, including through participation in NATO-led operations and efforts to promote regional co-operation. We encourage Ukraine to continue to contribute to regional security. We are determined to continue to assist, through practical cooperation, in the implementation of far-reaching reform efforts, notably in the fields of national security, defence, reform of the defence-industrial sector and fighting corruption. We welcome the commencement of an Intensified Dialogue with Georgia as well as Georgia's contribution to international peacekeeping and security operations. We will continue to engage actively with Georgia in support of its reform process. We encourage Georgia to continue progress on political, economic and military reforms, including strengthening judicial reform, as well as the peaceful resolution of outstanding conflicts on its territory. We reaffirm that it is of great importance that all parties in the region should engage constructively to promote regional peace and stability."

(22) Contingent upon their continued implementation of democratic, defense, and economic reform, and their willingness and ability to meet the responsibilities of membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and a clear expression of national intent to do so, Congress calls for the timely admission of Albania, Croatia, Georgia, Macedonia, and Ukraine to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to promote security and stability in Europe.

### SEC. 3. DECLARATIONS OF POLICY.

Congress—

(1) reaffirms its previous expressions of support for continued enlargement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization contained in the NATO Participation Act of 1994, the NATO Enlargement Facilitation Act of 1996, the European Security Act of 1998, and the Gerald B. H. Solomon Freedom Consolidation Act of 2002;

(2) supports the commitment to further enlargement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to include European democracies that are able and willing to meet the responsibilities of Membership, as expressed by the Alliance in its Madrid Summit Declaration of 1997, its Washington Summit Communiqué of 1999, its Prague Summit Declaration of 2002, its Istanbul Summit Communiqué of 2004, and its Riga Summit Declaration of 2006; and

(3) endorses the vision of further enlargement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization

articulated by President George W. Bush on June 15, 2001, and by former President William J. Clinton on October 22, 1996, and urges our allies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to work with the United States to realize a role for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in promoting global security, including continued support for enlargement to include qualified candidate states, specifically by entering into a Membership Action Plan with Georgia and recognizing the progress toward meeting the responsibilities and obligations of NATO membership by Albania, Croatia, Georgia, Macedonia, and Ukraine.

### SEC. 4. DESIGNATION OF ALBANIA, CROATIA, GEORGIA, MACEDONIA, AND UKRAINE AS ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE ASSISTANCE UNDER THE NATO PARTICIPATION ACT OF 1994.

(a) DESIGNATION.—

(1) ALBANIA.—The Republic of Albania is designated as eligible to receive assistance under the program established under section 203(a) of the NATO Participation Act of 1994 (title II of Public Law 103-447; 22 U.S.C. 1928 note), and shall be deemed to have been so designated pursuant to section 203(d)(1) of such Act.

(2) CROATIA.—The Republic of Croatia is designated as eligible to receive assistance under the program established under section 203(a) of the NATO Participation Act of 1994, and shall be deemed to have been so designated pursuant to section 203(d)(1) of such Act.

(3) GEORGIA.—Georgia is designated as eligible to receive assistance under the program established under section 203(a) of the NATO Participation Act of 1994, and shall be deemed to have been so designated pursuant to section 203(d)(1) of such Act.

(4) MACEDONIA.—The Republic of Macedonia is designated as eligible to receive assistance under the program established under section 203(a) of the NATO Participation Act of 1994, and shall be deemed to have been so designated pursuant to section 203(d)(1) of such Act.

(5) UKRAINE.—Ukraine is designated as eligible to receive assistance under the program established under section 203(a) of the NATO Participation Act of 1994, and shall be deemed to have been so designated pursuant to section 203(d)(1) of such Act.

(b) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—The designation of the Republic of Albania, the Republic of Croatia, Georgia, the Republic of Macedonia, and Ukraine pursuant to subsection (a) as eligible to receive assistance under the program established under section 203(a) of the NATO Participation Act of 1994—

(1) is in addition to the designation of Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Slovenia pursuant to section 606 of the NATO Enlargement Facilitation Act of 1996 (title VI of section 101(c) of title I of division A of Public Law 104-208; 22 U.S.C. 1928 note), the designation of Romania, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Bulgaria pursuant to section 2703(b) of the European Security Act of 1998 (title XXVII of division G of Public Law 105-277; 22 U.S.C. 1928 note), and the designation of Slovakia pursuant to section 4(a) of the Gerald B. H. Solomon Freedom Consolidation Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-187; 22 U.S.C. 1928 note) as eligible to receive assistance under the program established under section 203(a) of the NATO Participation Act of 1994; and

(2) shall not preclude the designation by the President of other countries pursuant to section 203(d)(2) of the NATO Participation Act of 1994 as eligible to receive assistance under the program established under section 203(a) of such Act.

### SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF SECURITY ASSISTANCE FOR COUNTRIES DESIGNATED UNDER THE NATO PARTICIPATION ACT OF 1994.

Of the amounts made available for fiscal year 2008 under section 23 of the Arms Export Control Act (22 U.S.C. 2763) such sums as may be necessary are authorized to be appropriated for assistance to the Republic of Albania, the Republic of Croatia, Georgia, the Republic of Macedonia, and Ukraine.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. TANNER) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROSS-LEHTINEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TANNER. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Tennessee?

There was no objection.

Mr. TANNER. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I want to thank Chairman LANTOS and my good friend, Representative PAUL GILLMOR from Ohio, for helping with this bill, and also the ranking member on the Foreign Affairs Committee.

NATO is probably arguably one of the most important organizations now in this post-cold war period. NATO, our allies in Europe and Canada, have presently almost 17,000 troops on the ground in Kosovo and 35,000 in Afghanistan. The alliance is strong, and it is very important from the standpoint of being an international organization that can go anywhere and bring order to chaos and back it up with some military capability. That is unique and critical, in my judgment, in this post-Cold War world.

NATO itself symbolizes really the cooperative effort across the Atlantic to promote regional and area-wide stability and also to encourage fledgling democracies, particularly in Eastern Europe. This legislation before us recognizes the continuing efforts of Albania, Croatia, Georgia, Macedonia and Ukraine to become members of NATO and encourages them to continue on that path. It is a statement from the Congress that we believe that what they are doing is important, and we believe that they are moving in the right direction.

Since 1989, 10 countries have joined NATO. We have seen Eastern European countries join NATO and make a remarkable contribution to the ongoing effort not only in Afghanistan and in the Balkans, but also as it relates to the furthering of democracy across some of those formerly Warsaw Pact countries. Every President has endorsed the efforts that are embodied in this bill in terms of the expansion of NATO, and this process is not yet complete.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for recognizing the great work that both Chairman LANTOS as well as Congressman GILLMOR of Ohio have done in paying attention to this issue of NATO.

Madam Speaker, I am so pleased to support this very timely legislation. This measure is a further step in helping to ensure that NATO, its member states and those aspiring to join this alliance are united in pursuit of European democracy and security.

Since its formation in 1949, NATO's mission has been to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilization of its members by promoting stability and well-being in the North Atlantic area.

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The measure before us serves to express America's continued support for these important goals.

The NATO Freedom Consolidation Act should help to nurture all those European states that may eventually join that alliance and give it a sense of common strategic peacekeeping goals, by encouraging them to prepare, assume and maintain the responsibilities of membership.

Specifically, the legislation calls for the timely admission of Albania, Croatia, Georgia, Macedonia, and Ukraine to NATO and authorizes security assistance for these countries in fiscal year 2008. The standards for joining NATO should not be lowered in any way and each country should be evaluated individually on the merits.

Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia have been making progress on reforms through their participation in the NATO Membership Action Plan since 2002.

Georgia and Ukraine have not yet been granted a Membership Action Plan, but these two nations are making strides in order to qualify for MAP.

The NATO Freedom Consolidation Act will provide important incentives and assistance to the countries to continue the implementation of democratic, defense and economic reforms. In these times, Madam Speaker, when we have important missions to accomplish overseas, I encourage my colleagues to vote in support of this measure.

Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to Mr. GILLMOR, who just returned from a NATO conference overseas.

Mr. GILLMOR. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding and also for her support of this resolution. I am very pleased to join with my colleague, JOHN TANNER, in supporting this resolution.

NATO is our most successful military alliance, maybe the most successful military alliance in history. It won the

Cold War, and it is also providing security now in many other areas of the world that are outside the exact geographical footprint of the NATO countries. For example, as Mr. TANNER pointed out, there are troops in the Balkans. There are NATO troops in Afghanistan where they are carrying the fight. Many of those NATO allies have had troops also in Iraq.

Very shortly after NATO was created in 1949, there was another group called the NATO Parliamentary Assembly to keep a close liaison between the North Atlantic Council, which is NATO, and the parliaments of those countries. Mr. TANNER and I have had the opportunity to represent the United States on that organization for I think a little over 10 years, and it has been a very valuable organization from the point of view of the United States. We have both had the opportunity at different times to serve as vice president of it and as chairman of the Economic and Security Committee, and Mr. TANNER now leads our delegation to that group.

One of the things that I think is important about that when we go, as Republicans and Democrats, we seem to quit being Republicans and Democrats when we get outside of the United States. I would say when we meet with our European allies, the only way they know which party we belong to is when they ask us, because we speak with one voice.

But many of the nations on the other side of the Cold War east of the Iron Curtain are now members of NATO, and they are some of the strongest and most enthusiastic members. As recently as 2004, seven new countries were added, all of them Warsaw countries, bringing the NATO membership to 26: Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

I want to point out that NATO is not a club you just join. You have to earn membership in NATO. It is a military alliance. You have to meet the criteria, and you have to contribute your part to that military strength in order to be a member. As long as the new members meet those commitments, NATO will continue to be a strong alliance and one of the strongest forces for peace, stability, and democracy in the world.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TANNER. Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to recognize a member of our delegation to the NATO PA; and by the way, Mr. GILLMOR is a vice president of the NATO PA this term, and I am proud to serve with him, and now I would like to recognize a member of our delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. EMERSON), and yield to her such time as she may consume.

Mrs. EMERSON. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 987.

I want to tell a little story, if that is all right. Back in 1968 when I was 17 years old and a senior in high school, my high school actually organized a

spring break Eastertime trip to the Soviet Union, to Czechoslovakia, to Poland, and to East Berlin. It was my first trip out of the country; it was my first trip on an airplane; and of all places to go, it was behind the Iron Curtain.

I knew a lot about NATO back then simply because we were studying it in my civics class, but I really didn't understand the importance of NATO until I went on that trip; and I didn't understand what it all meant until I went with my colleagues to my very first NATO Parliamentary Assembly meeting a few years ago.

When you went to visit countries behind the Iron Curtain back when communism was rampant, it was remarkable to go into these countries where you had no freedom, no expression of thought, no nothing. It was gray and it was dreary, and it was so sad. Even though we were able to spend, at least in Czechoslovakia, time with some students, you really understood the importance of protecting your civil rights and your freedom of speech. I really understood that for the first time because of course we were all as kids afraid that we were being bugged in our hotel rooms and we were afraid to say anything because we thought we would get taken by the police.

Anyway, back to my first NATO meeting and we are sitting across the table from members of the Czech Republic, from Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, countries that had always been under the iron thumb of communism and the Soviet Union, and with the fall of the Berlin Wall, of course, were able to come into their own once again. That is one of the most remarkable things about getting to know our fellow parliamentarians and understanding their great desire to join an alliance like NATO that has done really an amazing job in protecting the North Atlantic region and our allies throughout that particular area.

I don't know that people really understand the importance of this treaty organization and how it has fostered security and cooperation for almost 60 years now.

I know, though, that the work of NATO is not complete because we have newly democratic countries such as Georgia and the Ukraine who have expressed strong interest in joining NATO, as well as other countries like Croatia and Macedonia who have actually opened constructive dialogues on their potential for NATO membership.

When you have lived or touched on what it is like to live in countries that had no freedoms or protections like NATO can offer, it is so important for us to look favorably upon their opportunity to join this important treaty organization.

There is no doubt in my mind that NATO membership will be able to further our goal of extending democracy throughout the globe. Certainly H.R. 987 will help accomplish this goal, and I am very pleased that my colleague,

Mr. TANNER, has offered this bill; and I look forward to its passage.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I thank Mr. TANNER for his leadership.

Mr. TANNER. Madam Speaker, I want to thank Mrs. EMERSON and Mr. GILLMOR, and you, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, for participating. This is an important bill.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. TANNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 987.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### SUPPORTING THE GOALS OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Ms. WATSON. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 149) supporting the goals of International Women's Day.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 149

Whereas there are over 3,000,000,000 women in the world, representing 51 percent of the world's population;

Whereas women continue to play the prominent role in caring for families within the home as well as serving as economic earners;

Whereas women worldwide are participating in the world of diplomacy and politics, contributing to the growth of economies, and improving the quality of the lives of their families, communities, and nations;

Whereas women leaders have recently made significant strides, including the 2007 election of Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi as the first female Speaker of the House of Representatives, the 2006 election of Michelle Bachelet as the first female President of Chile, the 2006 election of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf as the first female President in Africa's history, and the 2005 election of Angela Merkel as the first female Chancellor of Germany, who will also serve as the second woman to chair a G8 summit beginning in 2007;

Whereas women account for 80 percent of the world's 70 million micro-borrowers, 75 percent of the 28,000 United States loans supporting small businesses in Afghanistan are made to women, and 11 women are chief executive officers of Fortune 500 companies;

Whereas in the United States, women are graduating from high school at higher rates and are earning bachelors degrees or higher degrees at greater rates than men, with 88 percent of women between the ages of 25 and 29 having obtained a high school diploma and 31 percent of women between the ages of 25 and 29 earning a bachelors degree or higher;

Whereas despite tremendous gains, women still face political and economic obstacles, struggle for basic rights, face the threat of discrimination, and are targets of violence all over the world;

Whereas worldwide women remain vastly underrepresented in national and local assemblies, accounting on average for less than 10 percent of the seats in parliament, except

for in East Asia where the figure is approximately 18 to 19 percent, and in no developing region do women hold more than 8 percent of the ministerial positions;

Whereas women work two-thirds of the world's working hours and produce half of the world's food, yet earn only 1 percent of the world's income and own less than 1 percent of the world's property;

Whereas in the United States between 1995 and 2000, female managers earned less than their male counterparts in the 10 industries that employ the vast majority of all female employees;

Whereas of the 1,300,000,000 people living in poverty around the world, 70 percent are women and children;

Whereas according to the United States Agency for International Development, two-thirds of the 876,000,000 illiterate individuals worldwide are women, two-thirds of the 125,000,000 school-aged children who are not attending school worldwide are girls, and girls are less likely to complete school than boys;

Whereas worldwide women account for half of all cases of HIV/AIDS, approximately 42,000,000 cases, and in countries with high HIV prevalence, young women are at a higher risk than young men of contracting HIV;

Whereas globally, each year over 500,000 women die during childbirth and pregnancy;

Whereas domestic violence causes more deaths and disability among women between ages 15 and 44 than cancer, malaria, traffic accidents, and war;

Whereas worldwide, at least 1 out of every 3 women and girls has been beaten in her lifetime;

Whereas according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, at least 1 out of every 6 women and girls in the United States has been sexually abused in her lifetime;

Whereas worldwide, 130,000,000 girls and young women have been subjected to female genital mutilation and it is estimated that 10,000 girls are at risk of being subjected to this practice in the United States;

Whereas according to the Congressional Research Service and the Department of State, illegal trafficking in women and children for forced labor, domestic servitude, or sexual exploitation involves between 1,000,000 and 2,000,000 women and children each year, of whom 50,000 are transported into the United States;

Whereas between 75 and 80 percent of the world's 27,000,000 refugees are women and children;

Whereas in times and places of conflict and war, women and girls continue to be the focus of extreme violence and intimidation and face tremendous obstacles to legal recourse and justice;

Whereas March 8 has become known as International Women's Day for the last century, and is a day on which people, often divided by ethnicity, language, culture, and income, come together to celebrate a common struggle for women's equality, justice, and peace; and

Whereas the people of the United States should be encouraged to participate in International Women's Day: Now therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports the goals of International Women's Day;

(2) recognizes and honors the women in the United States and in other countries who have fought and continue to struggle for equality in the face of adversity;

(3) reaffirms its commitment to ending discrimination and violence against women and girls, to ensuring the safety and welfare of women and girls, and to pursuing policies that guarantee the basic human rights of

women and girls both in the United States and in other countries; and

(4) encourages the President to—

(A) reaffirm his commitment to pursue policies to protect fundamental human rights and civil liberties, particularly those of women and girls; and

(B) issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe International Women's Day with appropriate programs and activities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. WATSON. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

Ms. WATSON. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution, and I first want to thank the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) and the other cosponsors of this resolution for recognizing International Women's Day in honor of the contributions and achievements of women all over the world and the importance of promoting and protecting their rights.

I want to pay special tribute today to my distinguished female colleagues on the Committee on Foreign Affairs, who are performing their important responsibilities with distinction and honor. I also want to recognize my distinguished colleague, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN), who has achieved the distinction of becoming the first woman to obtain the ranking position on this committee.

Today, women all over the world are becoming leaders in science, medicine, the arts, politics, business, and even the military.

Despite this progress, women and girls continue to represent the majority of the poor, the chronically hungry, refugees, the HIV-infected, the sick, the uneducated and the undereducated, the unemployed and disenfranchised people.

Women are also subject to specific forms of physical and structural violence and discrimination because of their gender. These include sexual violence in both conflict and nonconflict situations, sex trafficking, and domestic violence from their partners and family members.

Cruel cultural practices targeted at women include denial of voting rights, freedom of movement, and property rights. Women are also subjected to genital mutilation, forced and early marriages, humiliating and harmful